

## **Testimony before the Human Services Committee**

**February 23, 2010**

### **Opposition to SB 32**

I'm Don Fischer, from Stratford and a beneficiary of both Medicare and Medicaid for the Employed Disabled. I am concerned that implementing some of the Governors' budget recommendations in SB 32 will start the piecemeal erosion of access to care by people with disabilities, who are often among the poorest in our state.

The proposed \$20 co-pay each month can discourage people from filling prescriptions. Twenty dollars is a lot for people living on a shoestring budget. Further dangers in SB 32 include: co-pays for outpatient services, no coverage for over-the-counter and certain other medications, and none for eyeglasses. The result: people may not be able to afford any or all of these and thus risk becoming ill. If medications, outpatient visits and vision care become harder to obtain now, would dental, mental health and other vital needs be gradually rationed by future increases in co-pays and the withdrawal of these services?

Consider this: Outlays from our state budget are an investment in our people and will actually save money in the long run. Availing oneself of medications and services that undergird wellness now, prevents the higher cost of treating deteriorated health in the future.

Since receiving Medicaid for the Employed Disabled in 2002, for the first time in my adulthood I could afford to obtain adequate care in every way: physical, mental, dental and optical.

In this last year, I had a lemon sized, benign colon tumor removed, which would have become cancerous had I remained in financial fear of treatment, if I had numerous co-pays, and other costs. Please do not let this fear be the future of so many. It could cost our state budget more for treatment that could have been prevented, and perhaps save lives.